



# Backgrounder

The African Conservancy is a nonprofit organization founded in 2000 by Corinne and Norbert Waldenmayer. Its mission is to preserve the last remaining African wilderness to benefit current and future local, regional, and global stakeholders. A mission of extreme urgency since Africa's biodiversity is being destroyed faster than nature can replace it; rural African life and cultures are disintegrating; African governments do not have the means to protect natural assets; and the global community has become detached from the wilderness, at the detriment of its spirituality, breadth of consciousness and interconnectedness.

The last 100 years have witnessed a terrifying decline in rural, sub-Saharan African's ability to survive. Misunderstood, misguided, and misinformed, the societal deterioration has been matched only by that of the environment, which is also being destroyed at an alarming rate. Overpopulation, over-utilization of soil, and a dependency on foreign goods that can never be satisfied are eroding the social fabric and long-established traditions of living within one's place in the environment. Massive habitat destruction, pollution of water sources, fencing, hunting, and subsistence and commercial poaching are bringing Africa's greatest asset, its wildlife, to the brink of extinction. Unmitigated and unchecked, these trends will soon be irreversible and the last balanced environments on our planet will be destroyed, at irreparable loss to humanity.

By promoting respect and appreciation for wildlife and the environment, nurturing cultural traditions, and supporting economic self-sufficiency, the African Conservancy is empowering the people of Africa to find a constructive path into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a path that will not cost them their natural and cultural heritage. This path will ensure that people will be able to satisfy their most basic need in the years to come: connecting with nature in a way that most of the "modern" world has managed to eradicate.

The African Conservancy's approach is logical: create a model that works in a carefully selected, high-potential environment and, later, adapt the model to fit other environments. The Conservancy's approach is holistic: create a portfolio of programs that address the problems as a whole in one area, rather than disperse its resources like many other bandages over the continent. The Conservancy's approach is also inclusive: connect the First and the Third World for the benefit of both.

The African Conservancy's portfolio of programs includes wildlife, environmental, and cultural education; cultural preservation and cultural empowerment; and wildlife protection and rehabilitation. All Conservancy programs are conceived, designed, and implemented in Africa with African staff and government and community partners, and all the programs contribute to economic development and promote self-sufficiency.